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The Coming Debate in the Senate.

We hope there is no irrelevance in saying plainly that the main trouble with Mr. Wilson's prospectus, which he himself regards as so explicit, is that nobody can understand it. Evidence of the failure of the speech to make a distinct impression on any inquiring mind, in any country, is accumulating every day.

You may hear on every side expressions of rapt admiration of the lofty tone and high ideals of the President's utterance, but this is precisely as a person might be thrilled to the very glaziers by the solemn and stately music in some dim old cathedral, without having the slightest idea of what the music signified or even of what tune the sublime organist was playing.

For that reason we are not surprised that our British friends, puzzled over the phrase "peace without victory," should be asking themselves how this gentleman in Washington expects a peace that shall be lasting, attended by the reparations and guarantees which the Allies have declared it to be their unalienable purpose to exact from Germany, without that very victory, either won by arms or by enforced surrender, for which the Allies are fighting with prospects every day brightening.

Nor are we surprised that our French friends, studying the vague phraseology in which Mr. Wilson has sought to veil his transcendental internationalism, should dismiss it as Utopian and transfer their attention at once to the trenches.

Nor can anybody be astonished that while the speech should be generally regarded in German quarters and among German sympathizers as distinctly pro-German, because it seems to lend a hand to help the Central Powers out of the hole which they have dug for themselves, these same Germans are puzzled to the very core of their intellects to know what Mr. Wilson means when he talks about policing them into an acceptance of such principles as the consent of the governed, the democracy of the world, and the discontinuance of great preponderant armies. They are sure to ask if he also has in view the discontinuance of great preponderant fleets.

And they would like further light on his proposal to give every great people a direct outlet to the sea. If it does mean the neutralization of the Bosphorus for Russia's benefit, does it likewise mean the neutralization of the Kiel Canal? Does it also mean free German access to the River Scheldt?

Our own theory, derived from a conscientious study of this speech and the preceding notes, is that President Wilson does not really know himself exactly where he is coming out, as he drives one way or another way, lured on from phrase to phrase by the joy of begetting words and the temptations of what an English newspaper aptly describes as a pontifical style.

For Americans—which after all is the most important thing, inasmuch as President Wilson addressed the Senate and the world as the responsible head of our Government while declaring almost in the same breath that he spoke only as an individual—there must be in store more or less enlightenment in the coming discussion by the Senate of the President's vast but nebulous projects.

Perhaps this debate will enable even Mr. Wilson to see more clearly toward what a prodigious adventure his feet are now pointed. Surely since our national history began there has never been an occasion calling more urgently for absolutely courageous utterance, for absolute independence of partisanship and for absolute uncompromising Americanism in the Senate of the United States!

An Autopsy on Iowa.

In a debate in the House of Representatives on January 19 on the subject of subversion of the Hon. ROBERT F. HOBSON of Pennsylvania remarked that he was tired of the discussion, except to the extent of saying a word in behalf of an item of \$58,000 for a post office at New York, which is in his district and "probably has a population of 4,000," although the last census gave the number of residents as 2,700.

It appeared that the Hon. JAMES

W. GORDON of Iowa had made snoots at Somerset, so Mr. HOBSON hurried from a defence of that probably thriving town to an assault on Iowa, where Cedar Rapids has a public building that cost \$350,000.

"Cedar Rapids is dead," the county is dead, and, in fact, Iowa is dead. Iowa decreased in population 7,000 between the last census and the preceding one. Pennsylvania increased more than 1,300,000 people from 1900 to 1910, and Pennsylvania is a going State. [Applause.]

Some writers have concluded that Iowa has stopped growing because the farmers became so rich that they bought up all the land and got so many motor cars that the increase in population was run over and killed. The real reason, however, might have lain in Mr. HOBSON if he had ambled over to the Senate chamber three days after he made his charge relative to the death of Iowa. It must be evident to all, since Monday last, that what's wrong with Iowa is that she has not the freedom of the seas. She has the Mississippi on one side, the Missouri on another and the Des Moines across, from corner to corner, and she has more railroads than almost any other State, but she has not the freedom of the seas, "the sine qua non of peace, equality and cooperation."

Pennsylvania, on the other hand, is notoriously in possession of the freedom of the seas. Now, as the seas ought to be "free and common in practically all circumstances for the use of mankind," there can be "no trust or intimacy between the peoples" of Pennsylvania and Iowa until something is done. Perhaps the Khan of Khiva or the President of Liberia will address a privy council or a legislative body with a view to bringing peace between Iowa and Pennsylvania and will point the way whereby the seas, all seven of them, will wash every county of Iowa. But the address, when delivered, should be very, very informal.

Why Not Compulsory Obedience to the Present Laws?

"The right of men to quit work," says JOHN MITCHELL, "is sacred." So it is, and forced labor, though it is described attractively as "compulsory arbitration," will not be accepted by workmen, unionized or not unionized. The constitutionality of a law pretending to hold a man to a task he wants to abandon would immediately be attacked. If it were found that the Thirteenth Amendment, which provides that involuntary servitude shall not exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction, did not nullify such an enactment, we should have another amendment covering the subject as soon as it could be attached to the Constitution. The movement in itself would not be restricted to a few trade unionists; every man capable of comprehending the possibilities of the proposed innovation would support it with all his strength.

If such a restriction were imposed on the liberties of men employed in the operations of street railways, how long would it be before it would be extended to other callings? That compelling partakes of the nature of a public utility is contended to-day; the production and distribution of food-stuffs are essential to the life of the country; compulsory dairying would have been popular when the milk strike was in progress. There is scarcely a human occupation that could not plausibly be brought within the definition of "public utility."

Actually what is needed is not less liberty for employees, but more. Let the dissatisfied quit their work. Do not attempt to restrain them. But while they are exercising their unquestioned right, let others who want to take their places enjoy their right so to do, and protect them in it. Therein lies the answer to the question, the solution of the problem. The terror that fills the public when a transportation strike is called does not flow from the fact that JOHN DOE has left his job, but is inspired by the laxity of administration which permits JOHN DOE to keep RICHARD ROE from doing the work he wants to do. JOHN not only utilizes his freedom, but he says that RICHARD shall not enjoy his; and pusillanimous, cringing politicians encourage JOHN, to the injury of RICHARD and the public RICHARD would serve.

If for compulsory arbitration and the forced labor it connotes compulsory obedience to the penal law and the peace it brings be substituted, public utilities will perform their functions unimpeded, and there will be no need for talk of depriving this man or that man of even a little of his liberty.

Carrying Home Your Own Bundles.

The Federal Bureau of Census has undertaken to investigate the cost of city cartage as applied to the distribution of commodities by retailers. The merchant has frequently made a study of the matter from the point of expense to himself, but the bureau is making its survey to discover the effect upon the high cost of living to the consumer.

For four important commodities, coal and wood, milk, ice and department store merchandise, the expense of delivery costs on the average more than eight per cent. of the total cost to the consumer. There is no doubt that the delivery of merchandise has been carried to an excess; that the person who insists upon the delivery of the smallest and most inconsiderable article has set a standard that the originators of the system had not conceived, and that the delivery of goods, like expensive packing, adds

greatly to the charges that must be borne by persons who do not seek such luxuries of shopping.

Some merchants have attempted to reform matters by dispensing with the delivery system altogether, but have found they were unable to compete with those who retained the system. Others have offered a discount on purchases that are carried away by the buyers. And recently some of the large department stores attempted to reduce the labor of the delivery and return of merchandise by restricting the right of inspection of garments at homes of customers. The goods, it was claimed, were not only kept out of sale for days but had to be sent for as well as delivered. Another plan

branched was a cooperative system of delivery by stores in the same neighborhood. But none of these reforms seem to have been practical in their operations. And as a result the number of delivery wagons has grown instead of decreasing. The burden has not fallen so heavily upon the large department store, where the delivery expense represents less than 2 per cent. of the selling price, as it does upon the corner grocer and the small shop keeper who are compelled to accept it on account of the competition.

The further investigation promised may bring forth much enlightenment upon the subject and a reorganization of the system, but scarcely its elimination. It will be a long time before people will consent to carry home their own purchases even to defeat old H. C. L., or before there will be large retail firms bold enough to attempt to force them to be their own bundle bearers.

The Registration of Betrothals.

Representative CLARK of the lower house of the Michigan Legislature will go thundering down the ages as the man who strove to put the punch into betrothals. The eminent Michigander is appalled by the epidemic of breach of promise cases that is devastating this country, and for which no remedy has yet been found. The trouble seems to be, to his mind, that marriage vows show publicity and, exchanged as they are for the most part in secret, have little or no standing in a court of law.

Mr. CLARK would put an end to question popping without registration. When two young hearts discover that they beat as one, and are inclined to make permanent their earthly synchroism, the county clerk should be called upon to make an official record of the agreement that the enamored have entered into regarding a prospective marriage. Mr. CLARK is the father of a bill making it obligatory for engaged couples to inform the public, through a county clerk, that they are engaged.

The damages awarded in this country during the past year to plaintiffs of both sexes in breach of promise cases foot up a very large amount. The bright sunlight of publicity seems to be the only agent through which the unhappiness wrought by the inconsistency of woosers toward the wooed can be reduced to a minimum. There may be a lack of romance about the average county clerk and his environment, but the betrothed who really mean to play square with each other should have no hesitancy about registering their vows and, incidentally, exhibiting their good faith by paying a small fee.

What yellow journalism would do if Mr. CLARK's campaign against breach of promise cases is successful is a difficult and melancholy problem. But even the sensational press should be willing to make sacrifices.

Josephus's Clever Use of Slang.

Our dreadnought JOSEPHUS "talked freely" after the lapse of several days on the nomination of Dr. CARL T. GRAYSON for the post of medical director in the navy. Asked what special fitness Dr. GRAYSON had displayed that demanded his promotion over the heads of 114 senior officers, JOSEPHUS said:

"He was chosen among all the officers of the Medical Corps to guard the health of the President for four years. He has done that duty splendidly, while at the same time fulfilling his duties in hospital work. Doesn't that entitle him to some consideration?"

The indulgent reader will understand that JOSEPHUS was using the word "some" in the momentarily popular sense of a good fat lot, and hasten to concur. Some consideration! It certainly is, JOSEPHUS, and may we add that it is not the first time that you have said something, albeit not always with such a display of delicate humor?

Supposing ABRAHAM LINCOLN had been a victim to the idea of "peace without victory?"

Every time the millennium bobs up stocks go down.

Why shouldn't cats be licensed and muzzled, as Representative WALTER E. SAVAGE proposes in a bill introduced in the Connecticut Legislature? An animal tax of fifty cents a year is not excessive, and there is no reason why the owners of cats should not contribute to a town's revenues. The cat has long escaped taxation because it is regarded as a woman's pet. But women—God bless them!—are also champions and protectors of song birds, and the domestic cat hunts and kills relentlessly and with uniform success. The cat could be lightly muzzled when running free.

The noble twelve beach training we think that they will go right back to ham and eggs, and country sausages and all the other appetizing dishes that the hygienists eliminate from the dietary and the economists condemn.

GEORGE DUNN was fortunately spared the ordeal of reading the President's proposal of a peace without victory to be followed by a world alliance based upon the Monroe Doctrine.

According to a despatch from St. Louis the old Mansion House at Belleville, Ill., was burned down a few days ago. This was one of CHARLES DICKENS'S stopping places in his ride across the country. He and his family, and he describes it in "American Notes." DICKENS was generous of space in his references to hotels in his first trip to this country. The hotels were usually the best in cities which he visited. Even though the Belleville hotel was then "old, shabby, low roofed, half-collapsed and half-fallen," it was one of the last to disappear. The Planter's of St. Louis, with "most bountiful notes" of providing for the creature "where we were as handsomely lodged as though we were in Paris," are preserved only in name; Barnum's of Baltimore, where we found ourselves to be "the Traveling House of the City and the Carlton House of New York are no longer in existence. The Neil House of Columbus, Ohio, "richly fitted with polished wood of the black walnut," is perhaps the only one remaining.

Put Living Cost on Lack of Beef—Headline.

The stock raisers will blame the men who raise feed, and they will blame the munitions plants for the scarcity of farm labor. The trail goes all the way to Sarajevo and then ramifies.

It is told that in Moscow butter sells for \$1.70 a pound, while out in Siberia it is made into soap and wagon grease. So Russia is moving for better railroad facilities in order more economically to distribute her plentiful food. Poor, benighted Russia! She has yet to learn that the railway is only good to be nagged, ragged, dragged, hazed, robbed, beaten, deplored, joked and used as a frightful example to frighten voters into electing to legislative bodies railroad electors and bustlers.

The discovery that the principal tonnage on the Norfolk, Va., and Beaufort, N. C., "canal" is the coal carried on barges to the dredges digging the \$5,400,000 ditch whose diggers suggest the process of turning pork into bacon.

In a Supplementary Reader for the youths of Vermont who may desire to know "what opportunities the State can offer its ambitious sons and daughters," the author, WALTER H. CHOCKETT, says that "gold mining has been rampant at various times in the history of Bridgeport, Plymouth and Readsboro. This statement was much discussed by the people of New England. The Hartford Courant, however, offers as proof the experience of ABEL SLATON of Stowe, Vt., who washed out gold valued at \$200 on his farm and had it melted into a watch chain and other jewelry for himself and members of his family. The Courant adds that this experience might be duplicated by "any well to do man with some knowledge of geology and abundant leisure." But even at that gold mining would not seem to offer much of an opportunity in the Green Mountain State.

THORAU beat cost of living: spent \$3.74 in eight months.—Headline. He lived to the ripe old age of 43.

PROLONGING THE WAR.

Any One a Party to It Maliciously or for Gain Deserves Damnation.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: When we have seen the pictures of certain phases of the war which are shown all over the country, but which do not disclose a one-hundredth part of the horrors of the front as was constantly talked of by the press, and which are so terrible a destruction which grows greater day by day, when we have read in newspapers and magazines the many personal experiences of those who have been in the thick of the fighting; when we have heard men who have been near the front as was constantly talked of by the press, and which are so terrible a destruction which grows greater day by day, when we have read in newspapers and magazines the many personal experiences of those who have been in the thick of the fighting; when we have heard men who have been near the front as was constantly talked of by the press, and which are so terrible a destruction which grows greater day by day, when we have read in newspapers and magazines the many personal experiences of those who have been in the thick of the fighting; 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